

## Issue 5 March 3, 2006

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### Items of Interest:

**HHS and VA to Target Diabetes, Obesity Among American Veterans.** With obesity and deadly diabetes at higher levels among America's veterans, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have announced a coordinated campaign to educate veterans and their families about ways to combat these health issues. Veterans are nearly three times as likely as the general population to have diabetes, one of the major complications associated with being overweight. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease (part of the National Institutes of Health), 7 percent of the U.S. population has diabetes. Among veterans receiving VA health care, the rate is 20 percent. For more information on the battle against Veterans obesity and diabetes, visit [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov) or [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

# Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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## MEDCAP/DENCAP launch off Forward Deployed ARG

By Journalist 3rd Class Adam R. Cole, Task Force 76 Public Affairs

**PANAMA, Republic of Philippines** – Twenty-seven U.S. Navy and Army personnel paired up with 25 Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) medical personnel Feb. 22, as part of Exercise Balikatan 2006, to offer medical and dental treatment to 1,216 Filipino people and 24 animals in the town of Panama, Republic of Philippines.

The doctors, dentists and veterinarians were air lifted into Panama by CH-46E Sea Knights of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit's (MEU) Air Combat Element (ACE), launching from the USS Juneau (LPD 10), part of the Forward Deployed Amphibious Ready Group (ARG).

Once at the assistance site, the

medical and dental personnel teamed up with the AFP personnel in their respective fields and began seeing patients. Services provided ranged from pediatric to minor surgery. The emphasis of Balikatan, which translated into Tagalog, the Filipino native language, is "shouldering the load together." Such emphasis was evident at the medical assistance project.

"We were truly felt the we were 'shouldering the load' together," said Army Col. David Crudo, Balikatan MEDCAP/DENCAP coordinator and planner. "They really filled some areas where we were lacking like optometry, contributed greatly in pharmaceuticals and just in general, providing a very contributing helping hand to the efforts. We cer-

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**HIMBANGAN, Philippines** - Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Eric Schaefer treats a young girl in a small fishing village where Beachmasters have established a landing zone for landing craft from the amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49). Harpers Ferry along with USS Essex (LHD 2) and elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), arrived off the coast of Leyte Feb. 19 to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the victims of a devastating landslide. U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 2nd Class Brian P. Biller

## Doc Stops the Bleeding, Treats for Shock, Earns Bronze Star

By Lance Cpl. Patrick J. Floto,  
Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** - Critical medical operations to save the life of a wounded comrade are extremely stressful in the rear, where there is proper medical equipment. Conducting them in the back of a hum-vee while it speeds through a hail of shrapnel and small arms fire, however, is a true test of one's proficiency and courage.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Nathan McDonell faced and overcame that challenge a year ago in Iraq and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for it during a ceremony at Camp Margarita Feb. 17.

"I accept this recognition on behalf of the men I fought with, it was the greatest honor of my life," said McDonell.

McDonell then named those who ensured the survival of the team.

"Cpl. O'Brien, who had the strength to hold onto life that day, Gunnery Sgt. Miller for his instincts and leadership, and both Sgt. Pennock and Cpl. Kameron for aggressively holding off the enemy," McDonell said.

McDonell exemplified courage under fire on Nov. 8, 2004, in Ramadi, Iraq, while serving as the senior line corpsman for Company G, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment,

1st Marine Division.

During an assault in the Al Anbar capital city, McDonell identified the location of the enemy firing positions and returned fire, enabling the Marines to fatally wound three insurgents, according to his award citation. During the ensuing fire-fight, a rocket-propelled grenade penetrated the vehicle's armor and partially severed the right arm and leg of the Marine beside him.

"When I came up after the blast, I saw O'Brien bleeding profusely through the white smoke," recalled McDonell. "His wounds were bad, and my main concern was to stop the bleeding any way possible."

While still under intense fire, McDonell applied tourniquets to the wounded Marine's arm and leg and supervised his loading into the evacuation vehicle.

While driving at high speeds through narrow streets to reach the nearest medical facility, he began a second, more detailed evaluation of the wound. McDonell raised the Marine's mangled leg and with his bare hands, reached inside the wound and grasped the femoral artery and pulled it through the damaged tissue far enough to apply a second tourniquet.

When this failed to control the bleeding, he reached inside the Marine's leg and clamped down on the



**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** - Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Nathan McDonell received the Bronze Star Feb. 17, for saving the life of Cpl. Mark O'Brien, Nov. 8, 2004, during firefight in Ramadi, Iraq. *U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Patrick J. Floto*

femoral artery, holding it with his fingers until they arrived at the medical facility.

McDonnell added "Recently, my daughter was watching the 2006 Olympics and call the American athletes heroes. I told her that the real heroes are men and women like O'Brien, who have fought so bravely in Iraq and that I had the honor to meet them and serve along side them."



**SAINT BERNARD, Philippines** - The Inter-Community Operation Tambulig's medical aide site in Saint Bernard, Philippines, is the aid station for one of the evacuation sites for the refugees and survivors of Feb. 17th's massive landslide that buried an entire village. The station is run by Philippine doctors and volunteers, with assistance from doctors with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit and has been up since Feb. 20. *U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Will Lathrop, 31<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit*



## Camp Lester Doctor Helps Save Guamenian Woman's Life

By Pfc. Eric D. Arndt, Marine Corps  
Base Camp Butler

**CAMP FOTER, OKINAWA, Japan** - Doctors from U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa aren't used to making house calls or traveling thousands of miles to operate on a patient.

But when the urgent need for a neurosurgeon in Guam arose, Lt. Cmdr. Dennis J. Rivet answered the call without hesitation.

On the evening of Jan. 23, a woman was admitted to USNH Guam for a sudden loss of consciousness preceded by headaches. Tests concluded she needed an operation quickly or she would die. The procedure required a neurosurgeon, but Guam had none on the island.

Rivet, one of two Medical Corps neurosurgeons at USNH Okinawa, received word from Guam personnel late that night, and called the USNH Okinawa executive officer, Navy Capt. Dale M. Mole, for authorization to travel to Guam to perform the necessary procedure.

"I had a lot of questions concerning exactly what the patient's condition was and how he would arrange travel (to Guam)," Mole said. "(Rivet) indicated to me that she basically had hours to live."

After Rivet received authorization from his command to proceed, he picked up needed supplies and equipment from USNH Okinawa. He

then went immediately to Kadena Air Base and flew to Guam.

Surgery involved draining surplus fluid from the woman's brain.

The procedure was performed quickly because following the operation, he and the patient had to fly to Hawaii using the same flight crew. Due to flight restrictions, pilots have a 14-hour day which they can fly.

In Hawaii, he transferred her to a civilian neurosurgeon. There, she received more care until she can be rehabilitated.

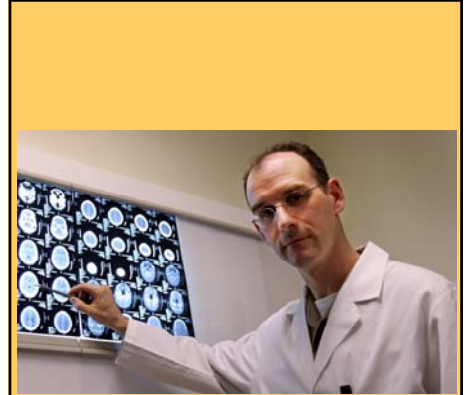
According to Rivet, there was little doubt that the patient would have lost her life without medical intervention. He also said that he played a small part in an expertly coordinated plan by medical and military personnel on Okinawa, Guam and Hawaii.

"It could not have gone more smoothly," Rivet said. "I want to emphasize that it was a huge effort by a lot of people to be able to treat the patient."

The event was the first time a neurosurgeon had ever been flown from Okinawa to Guam for such an operation, according to Rivet.

"He is a really outstanding neurosurgeon and Naval officer," Mole said. "He is really prepared to do what is needed to meet the needs of the patient."

"I thought it was the right thing



**CAMP LESTER, OKINAWA, Japan** — Lt. Cmdr. Dennis J. Rivet, one of two neurosurgeons stationed at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, flew to Guam on a moment's notice to use his expertise to help save a woman's life. The event was the first time a neurosurgeon had ever been flown from Okinawa to Guam for such an operation. *U.S. Marine Corps photo by Pfc. Eric D. Arndt, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler*

to do, and I was more than happy to do it," Rivet said. "I don't think there are very many other countries in the world that would do this."

## MEDCAP/DENCAP continued...

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tainly couldn't have seen the volume of patients we saw without them."

"The ARG is doing some tremendous humanitarian work, and I tell these Marines, Sailors and Soldiers that here in Jolo that they should be proud of the work they are doing," said Capt. Ronald Horton, Juneau commanding officer. "Whether we are in Southern Leyte or here in Jolo, we are committed to assisting the Philippine people. I feel greatly honored that the Jun-

eau can provide the platform for such a contribution as what these doctors, dentists and veterinarians are making."

At the assistance site, the medical and dental personnel were happy to make a difference.

"Just to see the smiles of the kids and the smiles of their parents as we treated them and gave them antibiotics to make them better, was incredibly rewarding," said Army Major Jane E. Gross. "To be able to offer them something to make their life better is extremely powerful."

"Looking at the number of patients we'll see through duration Balikatan, we know we are making a big impact here," said Crudo, who estimates that in the 15 MEDCAPS he's participated in over the course of his military career, he and other doctors have been able to treat more than 200,000 people. "These people need this assistance greatly, and we look forward to helping out as many as we can while establishing a long lasting bond with AFP personnel working alongside us."

## Hospital Sends Record Number of Sailors to Nursing School

By Journalist 3rd Class Heather Weaver, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

**BETHESDA, Md.** - Several National Naval Medical Center Sailors learned Jan. 18 that they will become officers via the Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program.

Judges chose the Sailors based on their submitted packets and interviews.

"Two-thirds of our candidates were accepted, which is a record number," said Chief Hospital Corpsman Angie Lackney, Career Development Office's leading chief petty officer. "That speaks volumes of these candidates, as well as their mentors. Submitting a quality package is a very grueling process. Members had a lot of information to gather and steps to go through. There was a lot of time and energy put into the application process."

"It's a relief and an honor to have been picked up for the Medical Enlisted Commissioning Program, because it's such a competitive program," said Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Rebecca Neuhart, Readiness

Division's leading petty officer and program selectee. "It was very difficult to put together the package. It's just very tedious, because there are so many roadblocks."

Sailors chosen for the program must reenlist for at least six years and must be able to complete their nursing degrees in 36 months.

The program is open to any Sailor with 60 or more college credits. Lackney recommends Sailors focus on math and science.

Neuhart suggests Sailors looking to submit packets for fiscal year 2007 get started now.

"Start getting prepared as early as possible. The more time you have, the better prepared your packet will be," Neuhart said. "Sometimes you'll want to give up, but once you hear you are accepted, it makes all that hard work worth it."

Bethesda's Career Development Office is the place to start the application process, said Lackney.

"Interested Sailors should speak to their Career Information Team representative in their department,"



she said. "Then, we suggest the Sailor get a mentor who has gone through the application process and have the Sailor attend meetings with tips on package preparation."

Lackney added "It's a lot of work to make sure Sailors' packets are ready for the board. The most rewarding part of all of the work is the excitement and the look on the Sailors' faces when we tell them they have been accepted."

## DoD Launches Domestic Violence Awareness Campaign

By Sgt. Sara Wood, USA, American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** - The Defense Department launched a national program to increase awareness among service members and their families about domestic violence.

DoD is partnering with the National Domestic Violence Hotline for the campaign, which is themed, "Take a stand against domestic violence."

The campaign is designed as an intervention message to educate service members and their families about domestic violence and connect them to the 24-hour-a-day hotline, said Gail McGinn, who is performing the duties of the principal deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

"It is an effort to focus the whole country on domestic violence issues," McGinn said. "We want to make sure that people have the opportunity to stop and think about domestic violence and highlight that as an issue in society as well as in the military."

Educational materials about domestic violence will be distributed at military installations and in key public places in surrounding civilian communities. The campaign also will include public service announcements in military media outlets.

"We're hoping that more victims of domestic violence will make themselves known to us so that we can provide assistance," McGinn said. "We're also hoping that by raising the visibility of the issue, we help people to reconsider their behavior and actually be more willing to report domestic violence."

Domestic violence is a significant issue in DoD, as it is in society as a whole, McGinn said. The department already has an active program to address the problem, including support and counseling services, she said, and a task force has studied the issue and made recommendations about how to improve that program. As a result of those recommendations, DoD has revised some of its policies and put new training programs in place, she said.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline offers access to domestic violence programs in the U.S., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The hotline provides crisis intervention, information and referral to victims of domestic violence and their friends and families 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, in more than 140 languages, with a teletypewriter line available for the disabled. The hotline's phone number is (800) 799-SAFE (7233), and the TTY line is (800) 787-3224.



**BETHESDA, Md.** – Rear Admr. Carol I. Turner speaks with a student from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School about medical educational programs and medical job opportunities in the Navy. *U.S. Navy photo by Paul Ormsby*

## NMETC Commander Visits Local Area High School

**By Chief Hospital Corpsman (FMF) Linda M. Mabile, Naval Medical Education and Training Command Public Affairs**

**BETHESDA, Md.** – As part of the Chief of Naval Operations' Community Outreach program, Rear Admr. Carol I. Turner, SHCE, Commander, Navy Medicine Support Command and Commander, Naval Medical Education and Training Command, visited Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School on January 27, 2005. She met with students and discussed educational opportunities and benefits of serving in the U.S. Navy.

Turner highlighted the many exciting jobs and places where Sailors are stationed around the world.

She also emphasized how the Navy is an organization that thrives on diversity and embraces a culture of lifelong learning that will ensure the success of any service member and developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century leaders for tomorrow.

Many of the students were interested in the educational opportunities provided by the Navy as Turner fielded questions on opportunities ranging from physician to marine biologist. At the conclusion of the brief, Turner encouraged each student to start to plan their future by mapping out their career paths, adding that, "If you are unsure about what you want to do after high school, the Navy is a great place to start".

## CMRT - 3 Donates Medicine, Furniture to Relief Camp

**By Lance Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti, Marine Corps Base Camp Butler**

**DARYAL, Pakistan** - Marines and Sailors with Combined Medical Relief Team 3 (CMRT-3) donated 900 bottles of liquid medicine and more than 300 pounds of furniture to the Sera Sialkot Tent Village in Daryal, Pakistan Feb. 14-16.

With much of the U.S. military transitioning from Pakistan in the next few weeks, efforts for providing healthcare and humanitarian aid are being shifted to many non-governmental aid organizations and tent villages.

One such tent village, Sera Sialkot, accepted the large donation of medicine and furniture, including floor decking for a hospital, pharmacy and a community kitchen, benches, computer tables, and an exam table, to better the lives of the nearly 2,000 residents.

"This is most gracious," said Dr. Ali Jadoon, the health manager for the camp and a clinical doctor. "Especially the U.S. Marines. They have provided all the infrastructure needed for our clinic and pharmacy and have given a great amount of medicines."

The relationship between the tent village residents and CMRT-3 grew strong during numerous visits to the village.

"After visiting them and seeing how many people needed assistance, we saw a great opportunity to help, especially when they identified the need of specific pediatric medicines," said Lt. Cmdr. Joe Patterson, the executive officer of CMRT-3.

While the medicine was the most important gift, according to Jadoon, the floor decking, shelving

units and benches are vital for operating a clean and organized clinic.

"The community kitchen now has a wooden floor, which is a lot healthier to cook food on instead of the ground," Jadoon said. "Also, the patients have a waiting area with benches. Instead of standing for long periods of time, they can wait comfortably."

Before receiving the shelving units, Jadoon said medical supplies were kept in large sacks requiring medical personnel to dig through numerous bags to find the medicine they needed.

"The shelving makes it quite easy to get medicine to people faster," he said. "The decking helps keep the medicine good and the water out."

Patterson said he hopes the contribution will alleviate some of the ailments and increase the residents' spirits.

Jadoon said the village residents are motivated and will continue on with their lives.

"Some of these people have lost everything," Jadoon said. "But they are strong people and will survive."



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